

6 FAH-5 H-320

ICASS STANDARD AND ICASS LITE

(CT:ICASS-5; 07-21-2006)
(Office of Origin: RM/ICASS)

6 FAH-5 H-321 TWO APPROACHES

(CT:ICASS-5; 07-21-2006)
(Applies to participating ICASS agencies)

- a. Two approaches have been developed to accommodate size and staffing differences between posts, "Standard" and "Lite." The primary difference between the approaches is that ICASS Standard tracks costs in much greater detail. ICASS Standard has 32 different cost centers. ICASS Lite has 16 cost centers. A description of the services and the predetermined distribution factors, which apply to both ICASS Standard and Lite, is found at 6 FAH-5 H-340 Cost Centers.
- b. Enhancements to the software allowing for the use of subcost centers offer some of the advantages of the ICASS Standard approach within the ICASS Lite approach thereby possibly avoiding a shift to ICASS Standard when greater detail in one cost center is needed. Care must be taken so that the option of sub-cost centers is not overused to the point where there is no work saved or benefit to be had using the ICASS Lite software.
- c. Sub-cost centers (see 6 FAH-5 H-322.6 Use of Sub-Cost Centers) are also available for use with the ICASS Standard approach. Sub-cost centers may also be used in situations where additional budget detail or differentiation is desired, such as for costs associated with consulates, costs associated with the operation of different buildings (e.g., chancery, annex, etc.), or costs associated with a specific service available at a given post (e.g., a specialized print shop or a fuel depot).
- d. ICASS councils determine the more appropriate approach. Large and mid-size posts generally use ICASS Standard and the smaller posts use ICASS Lite. The decision to use one approach or the other is a significant one. It should not be viewed as an annual decision. Once made to the satisfaction of the service provider and the council, the choice should stand, barring major changes at post such as a substantial increase or decrease in the number of direct-hire U.S. citizens or the number of agencies at post. Posts may propose switching between approaches based on local conditions and capabilities.

- e. Before switching approaches, post ICASS council and agencies' headquarters must reach consensus that the switch makes good business sense. If a change is contemplated, the following information may be useful to consider:
- (1) No post can expect any additional resources (funding or personnel) from Washington, DC headquarters for the purpose of performing the additional work necessary to support the ICASS Standard approach. Posts must reprogram within existing resources;
 - (2) If a decision is made to change from Lite to Standard or vice versa, the timing of that change must occur at the beginning of the fiscal year. The change should be planned for during the previous year so that workload counts for the 32 cost centers may be determined in advance. Such a change cannot be implemented mid-year; and
 - (3) In the event that the council and the service provider are unable to reach agreement, the issue will be brought to the chief of mission for resolution.

6 FAH-5 H-322 CONSIDERATIONS

(CT:ICASS-5; 07-21-2006)
(Applies to participating ICASS agencies)

Posts should weigh the considerations stated in this section in making a decision on which approach is best suited for their needs and available resources.

6 FAH-5 H-322.1 ICASS Budget Size

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(Applies to participating ICASS agencies)

What is the size of the ICASS budget? Be sure that the increase in detail and the increase in work are justified by the increased refinement of the costs. A smaller post budget may not be able to absorb the additional costs of the extra work required in order to switch to the Standard approach.

6 FAH-5 H-322.2 Post Agencies and Their Size

(CT:ICASS-5; 07-21-2006)
(Applies to participating ICASS agencies)

How many agencies are at post and what is their relative size? There are a number of ICASS posts with only two agencies present, including State, and there are several posts with over 40 agencies represented.

Generally, the more agencies at post, the more appropriate the use of ICASS Standard. A post should also consider other agencies' relative size at post compared to State.

6 FAH-5 H-322.3 Agency Services

(CT:ICASS-5; 07-21-2006)

(Applies to participating ICASS agencies)

Do all agencies take the same services? Generally, if all agencies at post are subscribed to all ICASS services, switching from Lite to Standard will not produce significant differences in agency invoices. However, if certain agencies provide a significant number of services for themselves, the ICASS Lite approach may not be sufficiently flexible to take this difference into account. To increase flexibility, use of sub-costs centers may be considered as a possible alternative to making the full switch from Lite to Standard. It should be remembered that if one agency's bill decreases, the invoices of other agencies' bills will likely increase.

6 FAH-5 H-322.4 Evaluation of Service Provider Options

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(Applies to participating ICASS agencies)

Is there a need for workload or cost data to evaluate service provider options? If outsourcing or other U.S. Government service provider options exist, the ICASS Standard approach provides data for a more detailed cost benefit analysis between the options. Many of the ICASS Lite cost center distribution factors are capitation-based which makes it difficult to prepare a quality request for proposal (RFP). The differentiation of services that ICASS Standard provides can also make it easier for potential service providers to bid on individual services, rather than bidding on bundled services. If a post is considering outsourcing options, or may be in a position to consider outsourcing options in the next few years, switching from Lite to Standard may facilitate this process.

6 FAH-5 H-322.5 Service Provider Resources

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Does the service provider have sufficient resources to handle the technical and workload requirements that a more complex system demands? ICASS Standard is more work. It requires more extensive data collection. The service provider must be able to handle the increased complexity in

budgeting, cost distribution, and accounting. The ICASS council's decision to move to ICASS Standard must be supported by adequate resources as requested by the service provider. Any decision must include consideration of whether there is a U.S. citizen direct-hire budget officer assigned to post. If the U.S. citizen direct-hire budget officer has regional responsibilities, the council should include that factor into the decision-making process.

6 FAH-5 H-322.6 Use of Sub-Cost Centers

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Will using sub-cost centers meet your needs without the additional work involved with the ICASS Standard approach? At ICASS Lite posts, use of sub-cost centers will offer some of the workload and cost distinctions offered by ICASS Standard but without entailing the full administrative burden of ICASS Standard. When there are pressures to move to ICASS Standard because ICASS Lite is not sufficiently flexible to reflect the true cost of partial use of services (e.g., taking only shipping and customs within general services), a sub-cost center can be created. The nontargeted services can continue to be treated the same way with no increase in workload burden or complexity. Or, when needed to obtain workload factor statistics for a potential outsourcing, use of a sub-cost center may be a good alternative to switching from Lite to Standard. For example, if another agency wants to provide or receive only one service in a cost center, perhaps travel within general services, travel can be treated as a sub-cost center, and workload statistics and costs can be developed only for that service. The council can use that information in evaluating options.

6 FAH-5 H-323 THROUGH H-329 UNASSIGNED